

RECKLESS RALPH'S

DIME NOVEL ROUND-UP



A monthly magazine devoted to the collecting, preservation and literature of the old-time dime and nickel novels, libraries and popular story papers.

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THE GREAT TRIALS OF HISTORY TRIAL OF DICK TURPIN

Who has not heard of Richard Turpin, the highwayman, the 'Jesse James' of the English boy? "The Prince of Highwaymen," as he is called, has figured in thousands of stories, in which his character is shown to be spotless. He is generous, kind-hearted, and was in the habit of only stealing from the rich to give to the poor. But in the following, the true character of this man is shown, and his life, instead of being as attractive as attempts have been made to picture it, was most miserable in its ending.

Turpin was born in Hampstead, Essex, the son of John Turpin, and put to school with a writing master, and later apprenticed to a butcher where he served his time.

Even when quite young he was frequently guilty of misdemeanors and often behaved in a disorderly manner. Tiring of his life as an apprentice, he joined a notorious gang of smugglers and deer stealers who operated in Essex. They soon had all the country terrorized, and they committed many atrocities, but finally, all of the gang but Turpin, were arrested in an inn, he making his escape by diving thru a window.

Finding the county of Essex too hot, Turpin went further north and met his "best friend," Tom King, a famous highwayman, first making his acquaintance by trying to hold him up, while King stopped Turpin with the same intentions. Not long after, Turpin committed his first murder by shooting a man servant of a Mr. Thompson who tried to effect his cap-

ture.

Turpin continued at this "gentle occupation" for about three years when in a melee he, by mistake, shot King. After this, with a large reward on his head he traveled to Lincolnshire where he stopped under the name of Palmer, the while posing as a country gentleman of means. He made frequent trips to Yorkshire, where he was finally apprehended. Here also he posed as a gentleman and upon every visit, he sold or exchanged many thoroughbred horses, every one being a firstclass animal.

While staying in Borough-Cave, Turpin was returning one day from shooting, which was at the beginning of October, 1738, and seeing one of his landlord's cocks in the road, he shot and killed it, and for this little misdeed he was put into the house of correction. As he would give no account of himself, except that he came from Longsutton in Lincolnshire, he was held while a messenger was sent to that town to discover anything that he could about Turpin's character.

The messenger returned with the news that a John Palmer had lived there and that he was once arrested for sheep stealing, but had made his escape, and that also several of the best horses of the county had been stolen from the squires, and of this crime the same Palmer was suspected.

Turpin was, upon this news, committed to the York Castle. After he had been there a month some gentlemen came from Lincolnshire and identified some horses as their property, among those which Palmer had tried to sell. Four months later his true personality was discovered, and al-

though it could not be proved, many people flocked to the castle to see Dick Turpin, the famous highwayman.

On the twenty-second of March, 1739 he was tried at York Assizes before Sir William Chapple on two indictments for horse stealing, and upon evidence was soon committed. The charges of being the highwayman, Dick Turpin, and of shooting the servant of Mr. Thompson, were then laid against him. Two witnesses, James Smith and Edward Saward, who were both brought from Essex by order of the Justices of that county were called upon as follows:—

Smith deposed that he had known the prisoner since he was a child, that he had married one of his father's maids and that he, James Smith, had taught the prisoner for about nine months, in which time he had learned from him "the art of writing." He also said that he had sold to him a gray mare the last time he had seen him, which was about five years ago, and was positively sure that the prisoner, John Palmer, was none other than the famous Dick Turpin.

Saward, upon being called, deposed that he had known Dick Turpin and his father for twenty-two years, and that he was sure that the prisoner and Dick Turpin were the same, as since he was in York he had spoken to the prisoner, who recognized him and said once to him, "Let us bung our eyes in drink," at which they accordingly "bunged" for a considerable time.

At first the prisoner denied this, but seeing that it would do him no good, he owned up. He was then convicted of horse stealing and sentenced to death. From the time of the sentence right up to the last minute when he jumped off the scaffold, Turpin kept up his spirits, and, as an old writing says, "was as jovial, as merrily and as frolicsome as if he had been perfectly at liberty and assured of an hundred years of prosperity to come." The day before his execution he bought a new suit of clothes, which he wore to his death, shared his money amongst the men who were to follow his cart as mourners, and gave two pairs of shoes to a poor woman of the town. After his grave he was carried and laid in his grave, which was dug very deep. Curious as it may seem, even here he was not to rest in peace,

for two days later his body was dug up by the anatomizers and carried away, but the mob, hearing of it, went and rescued the corpse and put it back in the grave and covered it with slacked lime.

REMINISCENCES IN NOVELANIA

Past and Present No. 4

by W. M. Burns

Just recently I got from a West Coast collector of thick type novels a few old timers in that line such as Flashlight Detective Series, published by M. A. Donohue and Company, Eureka Detective Series and Shield Detective Series both published by J. S. Ogilvie and Company. All these were familiar to me in my youth. But in the lot were various other series that I never even saw before. One is "the Wild West Series" published by Regan Publishing Corporation of 26 East Van Buren Street, Chicago.

In these I have #4 "The James Boys and Bob Ford," #11 "Bob and Cole Younger with Quantrell," #15 "The Oklahoma Bandits, the Daltons." All three written by Clarence E. Ray.

They bear no date of publication, but there is little doubt that they are much earlier than the Westbrook series of bandit tales that appeared in their Adventure Series. They sold for 25c each.

Another series that I never saw are I. & M. Ottenheimer Border Series.

In these I have #3 "Buffalo Bill, King of Scouts" by Harry Hawkeye, and #13 "Buffalo Bill and his Thrilling Adventures in the Wild West" by Nebraska Ned. Both tales being more or less biographical, but real facts all jumbled up and wrong. The latter named tale especially so. As in this, Buffalo Bill and not Wild Bill was the hero of the McCandlas fight. And in the story Wild Bill was mentioned more or less, but as "Wild Bill Hitchcock" not as Hickok. A curious jumble of fact and fancy, where even names were wrong. Written by a man with little knowledge of what he was writing about, as to facts.

Another series that I never saw before in the I. & M. Ottenheimer Bandit Series.

I have some nice tales in these as follows: #5 "Jesse James Thrilling Raid," #6 "Jesse James Wild Leap,"

#7 "Jesse James Mysterious Warning," #8 "Jesse James Daring Tricks," #11 "Jesse James, Man Hunter." All written by Capt. Kennedy. But in #5, 6, 7, the writer made the glaring error of calling Cole Younger, Clell Younger. Evidently did not even know the real names of the characters that he was writing and got Clell Miller all mixed up with Cole Younger. Somebody finally set him straight however as starting with #8 he began to call Cole Younger by his real name.

In the Shield Detective Series is one written by Allen F. Pinkerton, titled, "Saved at the Scaffold." From casual examination, it looks as if it might be a fine tale.

And among the "Eureka Detective Series" is a high favorite of my boyhood. It made a deep impression on my youthful mind at the time, and often of late years I have again, and again, wished that I could once more read it. Well, the wish is at last gratified and I am once more reading a few chapters each night of "The Frozen Pirate" by W. Clark Russell.

This tale along with Capt. Marryat's "The Phantom Ship," I consider the two best sea stories I ever read. And now I have the latter also in cloth bound format, after several years search for it.

There is an old adage that says, "All things come to those who wait." This is literally true very often in the case of dime novels, as I know from 18 years experience in dime novel collecting.

But I am still awaiting many an old time favorite novel of my youth to appear again. And I am very certain that the "Grim Reaper" will reach out for me long before my dreams along this line is realized.

NEWSY NEWS

by Ralph F. Cummings

Fred Orphal says one of our members in Maine sent him some copies of Golden Days. Also W. E. Bennett of Kansas City, Mo. sent "Oscar in Africa." This story which he clipped out of the 1882 issue, as he was at that time in the habit of clipping out the main stories of Golden Days. Fred says he read it again, but what puzzled him was, that he read it in the 1890's, and wonders if he read it in 1882 when

he was only eight years old. Well the puzzle was solved when he heard that 1882 was the original, and the 1890 was the reprint, as he understood Golden Days would send out a reprint in about every 10 years. Incidentally, that Oscar story covered travels in South Africa over the same route that a good friend of mine went to Zululand back in 1936. He took his brand new Chevrolet along on the steamer and when he got to Durban, drove off the gangplank and then over the roads for five hundred miles to his destination. (Petrol or gas to you, cost him 50c per gallon.)

Frank O. Hall, who expects to be a new member of H. H. Bro. soon, says he had just returned from a two weeks trip to visit Jesse James and the Hawks in Chicago, also Pall Mall cigarettes have chosen their story (Lindsay Whittier-Frank Hall) of the Jesse James story for their NBC coast-to-coast broadcast "The Big Story" for Sept. 29th, so let's hope it was well advertised in your newspapers so you could listen in to it. Mr. Hall has been asked to be present at said broadcast to interview Jesse (a short interview) at the end of the dramatization of said story.

William Micheals, 28 Woolson St., Mattapan, Mass., a former member of H. H. Bro. was up here Sept. 7th for a 3 hour visit. Also H. O. Jacobsen, 1245 Fairview Ave., Milwaukee, Wisc., was up here Sept. 26th. It was very nice meeting these two fellows, and I tried my best to make them happy while they were here.

George Flamm visited L. D. Webster of Cortland, N. Y., early in June.

Bill McCafferty is wondering if there are any members in H. H. Bro. who can write up an article on Nassau St., also the Bowery, in New York, and give it the real old dime novel slant. Bill just learned a few days ago that there is a Nassau Street in New Jersey too. Some one could write up on State Street in Chicago, an Old King Brady slant, and also Maiden Lane and the Bradys. Bill says if some one will do an article on Maiden Lane, he'll do one on a Queer Little street in that picturesque city of the Southwest, Ft. Worth, Texas, by the name of Jersey Lane.

Bill says he liked the fine article by Herman Pitcher on Marie Correlli. Bill

has some of her books, and was intrigued many years ago when he read "Thelma," and wants to reread "Romance of the Two Worlds," if he gets to it.

Won't some one tell us something about Opie Ried or is it Reed? and his writings. Bill would like a copy of his *The Starbucks Mag* of 1904 or thereabouts. Bill also writes, "Who is that guy that has just turned his nose at my favorite boyhood pals—Young Wild West and his pretty sweetheart, Arietta Murdock? He was the dashing Deadshot, the prince of the saddle, the wealthy young mine owner, a terror to evil-doers, from the bad lands in the days of Custer's Last Stand to the Red Cross Days of the first World War—nineteen or twenty years old in the days of Sitting Bull, and not a day older when he saved the life of the German Crown Prince in 1914. Mr. L. S. Patterson. As one Irishman to another, let me beg of you to say a few kind words about the pals of my Pal-may (Balmy) days, please. I think I'll write a "pome" about them someday, or at least about that noble horse who could easily rank with the historic steeds of Paul Revere, General Putman, and Washington's stallion, I mean none other than Spitfire, the horse incomparable.

Bill also asks, what is it that so many people have "agin" the Sunday School Kids that they must speak or write disparagingly of them, from the ranks of the Sunday Schools have come some of the greatest and bravest men and women that the world has known. Must one be a sissy to be a learner about the greatest Man that ever trod this earth—a Man that makes the greatness of Socrates, Plato, Caesar, Hannibal, Napoleon, Washington and the great and mighty of all ages sink into insignificance beside him. If the World had taken his teaching in time past instead of that of Nietzsche, whose philosophy made Adolph Hitler, Mussolini, and the De Autamont Brothers, it would have been at peace today. Brother Harry tells us some more about how you enjoyed Frank Reade, Nick Carter, and Old Cap Collier; for we, too, enjoy them, but don't condemn the Sunday School Kids. There are too few of them in this old world now. They are almost as rare as the stories you have written about. We

need more of them. I was once a Sunday School Kid, and, a Sunday School Kid grown up today, still going to S. S. I also read Old King Brady, Young Wild West and learned no two ways of crime from them. I am still out of jail, and believe in Justification by faith without works, and am what I am by the grace of God, as John Wesley would say, or was it Martin Luther.

Roy Morris went to Minneapolis on his first honeymoon, and just returned from his second honeymoon. Went to Missouri on the last trip, the land of the James Boys. When returning from Minneapolis they stopped at Northfield, and saw the stone building, which formerly housed the bank. Saw the bullet holes in the walls, also, saw the three story brick building across the street, and the window from which they shot the outlaws. The stone building is now known as Jesse James Cafe. While at Excelsior Springs, Mo. went out to the James Boys Farm, which is 9 miles northeast of Excelsior. Talked with Bob James, son of Frank for about an hour. Saw many interesting things, the country looks just like the pictures on the James Boys Weeklies, lots of hills and timber. Also went through Liberty. Kearney is about three miles from the James farm.

BELIEVE IT OR NOT AN EYE OPENER

by Geo. French

I hesitate to give you fellers a shock, but I got one, myself, so why not distribute it over a wide area.

It all resulted from my following up a tip about an old lady forty miles away who told my brother that she once wrote dime novels in addition to her regular love story writing. "She even has a bunch of the ones she wrote," he said, "and you might be able to get them."

All keyed-up over this alarming news I visited her home at the first opportunity, expecting to find, as I usually do when following up a tip on novels from one not familiar with the game, a bunch of stuff after the pattern of *Leisure Hour*, or *Seaside Library*, but I was due for a shock.

Arriving at her home, I was ushered into an attractive, old-fashioned par-

lor by Mrs. E. herself, and as keen-eyed, brilliant personality of nearly 80 years as I ever met. Her husband was fully as interesting.

I came to the point at once by asking her if it was true that she once upon a time wrote dime novels. She glanced at her husband and smiled. Her answer left no room for doubt as to her familiarity with the subject. "Yes," she replied, "at one period my whole time was devoted to writing for Street & Smith, Beadles, and Frank Tousey. I would even rent cheap rooming space in N. Y., and prowl thru the slums at night, in order to acquaint myself with the type of characters about whom I wrote. My own life is a typical dime novel," she said.

This is but a snatch of what she poured into my open ears, for when she once got started on those good old days, she proved to be just as voluble as her pen was back in the 90's and early 1900's when it would lead us thru the hair raising adventures of Old King Brady in Secret Service; of Young Wild West in Wild West Weekly; of Fred Fearnot in Work and Win; of the circus troupe in Do and Dare; of the heroine in My Queen, and even of the James Boys in Jesse James Stories.

Then in response to my question as to whether she saved any of these novels, she sent Mr. E. up attic for an old trunk, which proved to be running over with the novels in question, including a complete set of uncut "My Queen," with one exception (No. 29, I think); any quantity of Touseys famous magazines called Poker Chips and White Elephant; also Penny Magazines, Railroad Magazines, Clippings from Happy Days of the complete story "Doctor Jack or Ten Weeks on Lunatic Island" which she wrote under the pseudonym of James Montague I believe; or was it P. T. Raymond?

Then came another trunk full of paper cover love stories written by Lurana Sheldon, Mrs. E's love story pseudonym. In fact her maiden name was Sheldon.

Finally, as though she sensed the possibility of my being a bit pessimistic, she got out her old account book and read off the prices which she received for many of the tales then before us.

Maybe you can imagine how my fingers itched to get a grip on those rare Jesse James Stories, at least five of them; those richly colored low Secret Services; and in fact the whole caboodle—not just to get a grip on them, but to take them home with me; but it was not so to be, for my really good offer was turned down for sentimental reasons; she wouldn't part with them YET, even though she had several duplicates of some.

What I have outlined covers but a part of the prodigious amount of brain energy which this woman once devoted to turning out stories. She even substituted at times for Marshall P. Wilder who wrote for the Beadles Popular Library and for several other similar writers who would occasionally fall down on their routine work.

I could have held no doubt in mind if I would, as to the veracity of her statements when I saw the several newspaper clippings of those days, bearing her picture and detailed accounts of her work.

Nope, there is no doubt about it; Mrs. E. is one of the few remaining living authors of our thrillers, and the reason that you historical experts have lost her name in the shuffle, or rather have never found it, is that she was a substitute, who, when she was called upon to fill in, had to perform the task of familiarizing herself with the originals' style and then permit him to take all the credit for what she wrote in his place. This condition was not imposed upon her, however, when she wrote the My Queen Series, the love story tales, and her many many magazine articles and stories, in which instances she usually wrote under the name of Lurana Sheldon, and Grace Shirley.

There you have it, pards, in a nutshell. I'm not giving out Mrs. E's name yet awhile, for special reasons, but you who are curious enough can satisfy your curiosity to some extent by digging into the past for dope on Lurana Sheldon.

(This happened in 1938.)

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Ralph F. Cummings

Fisherville, Mass.